

Endure: II Timothy 2:14-26 – Marks of a Good Workman

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Preacher: Eric Morse

[0 : 00] Well, thank you, Josh, worship team. It's good to be with all of you today. This is the second 80 degree day in a row, and I looked on my weather app and there's three more coming.

So praise God for some beautiful weather. Excited to be here. We have the nice beautiful windows of the sanctuary, which I love to be able to look out and see the trees and the beauty of God's creation and then also study God's word, being able to see both these things. The way that God reviews himself to us, creation, his son, and his word, and we get to do all three here this morning.

Well, I had an old mentor back when I was in high school and he would meet with me every week and one of the things that he used to talk to me about was just, Eric, how's your study in the word? It's a normal thing that I think we all can agree on.

If you're discipling someone, you got to spend time in the word. And there's one thing you'd always say to me, is that Eric, bind your life to the word of God, for as you do, so life will go.

Bind your life to the word of God as you do, your life will go. And now in this section of 2 Timothy 2, we're going to see that Paul has similar advice in mind.

[1 : 19] That to bind your life to God's word means that every part of our lives is dictated by and directed with what God has to say.

And for his young disciple, Timothy, Paul wants him to live a life that is directed and devoted to God's word. So here's what he says. He says, I'm just going to read the first five words of chapter 2 verse 14.

Josh just read these words. Remind them of these things. We have to look back real quick just to black squeeze text to understand what these things are.

So look with me at verse 9. Paul says in which he's in prison writing the book, he says, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal, but the word of God is not imprisoned.

God's word is not in prison. It can be taken. It can be applied. It can be furthered in every moment regardless of circumstance. And then he says this in verse 11. It is a trustworthy statement.

[2 : 26] And in what you're about to hear is the summarization of the gospel, the summarization of the word all in a few sentences. If we died with him, we will live with him. If we endure, we will also reign with him.

If we deny him, he will live with him. If we deny him, he will deny us. And if we are faithless, he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself. And here's what Paul says. Timothy, Timothy, remind them of these things.

And right off the bat, I just want us to see that it is the job of teachers and preachers of God's word. Not to revolutionize, but instead to remind, to pass forward what has been passed on to you.

I just want to speak really clearly and specifically just for a moment. The direct context and application of this command is for leaders and teachers in the church.

And if you are someone who is a pastor or desires to be a pastor someday, or eldership or teaching positions in the church, if you desire towards that role and that calling, I just want to encourage you, encourage all of us as well, that the job of any teacher of God's word is to remind, not to revolutionize.

[3 : 50] And for Paul, this is what it means, this is an essential idea of what it means to be someone who is a worker of the word.

Look with me at verse 14, remind all of these things and charge them before God, not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hears. Do your best to present yourself to God

as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. Now the main point I want us to take away this morning, I think Paul is encouraging Timothy toward, is that this, that approved workers of the word, model biblical proficiency from a pure heart.

We're going to break this down, but here we read it again. Approved workers of the word, model biblical proficiency from a pure heart. And here's what Paul wants, he wants Christians and leaders alike, he wants them to see themselves as workers of his own word.

As we saw last week, Paul likes to use analogies. The pastor's got reminded us of the analogies that Paul uses such as a soldier who suffers.

[5 : 06] Christians are soldiers who suffer, athletes who compete, farmers who work hard and enjoy their labor. But now Paul spends this whole section, verse 14, 26, reminding us of this analogy, that the Christian is a worker who is faithful with his word.

And a worker is someone who has a set of tools and a goal in mind. A worker is someone who understands that his tool set, or her tool set, is essential to accomplishing the job at hand. And for Paul, and for this analogy to work, we have to understand that we are workers. And that we have a tool, and it is the Bible. It is God's very word, and it is the tool that is given to us as workers to go and advance God's mission.

This is the analogy Paul is presenting to Timothy. We are called the master and utilize our tool for our craft. So here's what Paul would say, he says, present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

So here's what Paul is doing. He's calling Timothy up to this high standard. To say, Timothy, as a leader in the church, and as a teacher in the church with authority, you are called to take God's word, to handle it rightly, to understand it, to apply it, to proclaim it, and to trust it as it helps the body become more like Christ.

[6 : 45] And just as God has wrestled with this throughout the series, the primary context is for leaders and teachers in this passage. But it is also for us as the body, that we would understand that we too are workers of the word, that every person has a part to play in working out the word of God in the church and in the world.

So let's just start right off the bat with our first point here. How in the world are we approved workers of the word? How do we model biblical proficiency?

How do we do that from a pure heart? Well, the first way is that we understand the word. We have to understand the word. Again, verse 14, here's what Paul tells Timothy, remind them, he says, remind them, and a reminding is a term that flies against the modern trend of being original at all costs.

Sermons and Bible teaching that proclaims that which has been heard before are being faithful to the task of teaching. And there's a massive epidemic in the church right now.

I read a 200 plus dissertation that talked about this problem and it is plagiarism from the pulpit. Seems that every month it goes by there's another story of another pastor who has plagiarized the sermon, taken it from someone else, either because of laziness or because of lack of direction.

[8 : 12] There's a lot of reasons why. What's interesting is that with sermon plagiarism, not only is the preacher not doing the work that enriches his own soul, the preacher is rejecting one of the greatest gifts that they have, which is to know God's word, to study it and to encourage the body towards right living.

But then there's the opposite, which is preaching that has gone so far towards the original side that the goal of such preaching oftentimes is just to...

somebody would take a sound bite of something original that I've said that no one has said before. And then we hear the oft-repeated phrase, wow, that's amazing, I've never heard that before.

Let me offer to you that if you ever hear something in a sermon and you walk away saying, I've never heard that, that's a flag. Is it possible you could hear something in a new way?

You could be struck to the heart by something for the first time, yes. But the goal of every preacher or teacher is not to be original. The goal is to proclaim that which is plain in the Word and which has been proclaimed for thousands and thousands of years.

[9 : 39] And here's what Paul wants, Timothy, remind them. The goal is that you would take the very truths of the gospel and you would make them clear again and again and again.

And then we have to ask the question, why? Why is the goal reminding? Seems repetitive, might seem dry and not revolutionizing.

Well, Jesus used the same form of this Word, this Word to remind, and he promises disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach you all things, and here's the Word, he will remind you of everything I have said to you.

This is heavy. Here's what Jesus says, the Holy Spirit's going to come and his greatest aid he's going to give you is that he's going to remind you of the things that I've already taught you. For Jesus, there's this great value in hearing truth, protecting it, and continually saturating ourselves in it. He's going to remind you of what I've been telling you this whole time and then Paul tells Titus, remind the people, very similar to this passage.

[10:46] There's a bunch of other references to the Word, remind or call attention to these things that Paul and Peter and Timothy and Titus, their goal is to take God's Word and to continue to repeat the same truths over and over and over again.

And we have to ask the question, why? I think we all know the answers because we are forgetful people. The amount of time was extremely short from the Red Sea being split, God's people being delivered, and the golden calf.

We forget so quickly God's promises, His truth, and what He calls us to do is to respond and obey Him. And when we forget, we are prone to wander.

And this is the charge of Timothy and to teachers of the Word in general. And it is a reminder of the vital importance of word saturation.

We must understand God's Word to start the process of being faithful and working His Word out. One of the ways that we do this is we remind ourselves through any means possible.

[11:58] One of the greatest ways you can remind ourselves of God's Word is just simply being with other believers. If the culture of our church is such that we all have God's Word on our hearts and on our tongues and on our minds, when you're around other believers, you will hear Scripture.

You will be encouraged with Scripture and we will encourage others. But other ways that we do this is to use modern technology. I think our phones and our digital calendars that we have now have such great potential to remind us.

Just like we set reminders on our phones. Oh, I forgot. I need to go feed the cows. I need to go meet with Joe. I forgot about that. I need to mow the lawn.

I need to go pick up fertilizer. I use reminders on my phone and they're annoying when they go off in the middle of a meeting. But man, I remember now. I need to do something. We should think of God's Word in creative ways.

How can I remind myself of truth? One of the ways it's worked for me is I often will set a Scripture that I want to memorize as the background of my phone. Every time I open that phone up, I see it.

[13:04] If I'm diligent enough in the moment, I'll just read it real quick. Do it enough times over and over and over again. But as such, recently I've done it with Psalm 121 and just memorized the first four lines that helped me when my moments of anxiety or worry or distrust says this.

I set my eyes to the hills from where does my help come from? My help comes from God, maker of heaven and earth. Four lines, just a month on my phone and it will be there forever.

And it's useful. It's helpful. It's helped me understand and know that God is my help amongst all other helps, helps in this world. God is the true help.

And it reminds me to trust Him. Without constant reminders to love God and follow His commandments, we stray like flies to a zapper. It is so easy to believe the lies of the world when we become disconnected to God's Word and God's people.

When we spend the time we ought to be with believers, with non-believers, I've seen this over and over and over again in my life and in others. That forsaking the church even for a short time for the company of the world almost always leads to a forsaking of obedience.

[14:21] We lose the refining, orienting presence of God's words in our life and lies from the world begin to seem more palatable. Here's some lies that over time creep into our hearts as we neglect God's Word.

I'm a good person. I am master over my own destiny. I deserve personal happiness at all costs, which eventually gives way to things like God as fictional.

God really even there. This life is all that there is. These are the types of deviations from the way God has designed us to operate and know Him that happen when we neglect God's Word.

I think I can speak for all of us when we say there are times and seasons when we all do this, aren't there? devotional time is getting dry, I'm bored of hearing the same things, I don't feel like this is

really making a difference.

All of these reasons we can easily step aside and say, you know what, I don't know, this Bible thing is really worth it. I want to encourage you towards the same thing that Paul encourages Timothy toward.

[15 : 33] Remind them of these things, charge them, charge them before God, and then he says this, not to quarrel about words. The Word of God is the basis for how we live life.

And there was a program that I was a part of, and many of you have probably been a part of, that the acronym is AWNA. You guys all know Iwana. It stands for Approved Workers and Not Ashamed. Well, it comes from this verse, and what's really cool about this verse is that the very idea of being an approved worker that's not ashamed is the idea that we understand, we apply, we proclaim, and we trust the Bible, and in so doing, we are approved for work in God's house.

This isn't just for an organization like Iwana. This is for the body of Christ to gather regularly, to commit ourselves to Bible proficiency, to know Genesis revelation, how God has spoken, how He wants us to live, and how He is calling us to our obedience.

And as we know God's Word and we understand it and we put time into reading, to studying, to understanding, and internalizing the truths about God and the truths about ourselves, as we do these things, what happens is that all of us, evangelism, our missions, our discipleship, the health of our families, the love for the widow and orphan, the perseverance that we have through suffering, the glorification of God by our daily worship, all of that is informed and empowered.

One quick suggestion I want to make to anybody who may be struggling with studying God's Word right now or spending time in God's Word is just ask two simple questions.

[17 : 21] As you read Bible and you read God's Word, you read stories, any part of the Bible that you read, these questions work. The first question is after you read it, few times, familiarize yourself with the Word, ask the first question, what does this passage teach me about my inadequacy?

What does it reveal about my sin and my inability to save myself? And then ask the second question, what does this passage teach me about God's provision?

How is this passage showing that God is my help and my redeemer? As you ask those two questions, as you study God's Word, what happens is we are constantly thrown back and forth into the rhythms of the gospel.

I am needy, God is my supply. I am broken, God is my healing. I feel no life, God is my life.

Every passage we can see God's work, His handy work across every page of Scripture to scream at us with loving words.

[18 : 31] I am your God. Come to me. So we remind ourselves of God's Word and we allow the Word of God to be spoken over us by preaching, teaching, rhythms of the church in which we spend time in God's Word.

But here's what's amazing about this phrase, do your best, present yourself as God is one who has proved a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of truth, is that the command at the beginning is do your best.

Which is really interesting because the term carries an urgent tone that Paul wants Timothy to exert all effort available to him to accomplish the following task.

It's a very strong term. Literally exhaust every ounce of energy you have to do this, Timothy, is what Paul is saying. And what is it that he's asking him to do?

Present yourself to God as one who has proved. My dad's been a high school basketball coach for 30 years and he coached me. And there's one thing my dad used to always say, a lot of coaches say it, but he used to always say it, every single game we'd be in the middle of a throw of a game and probably in the fourth quarter we're getting to the end.

[19 : 41] And my dad would say what to us to encourage us. He would say, leave everything out there on the court. All the time he would say that. Why would my dad say that?

It was the fact that even if we had lost the game, we poured every single thing we had into it. You can't walk away disappointed when you throw every single thing you have.

This is my best effort. And this is what Paul is telling Timothy to do. Give your absolute best effort to present yourself as approved.

And how do we do that? He gives the definition of how by rightly handling the word of truth. Be a worker of God's word.

The term worker used by Jesus, used by Paul, has connotations of working a harvest that someone else has sown.

[20 : 45] Someone else has tilled the land, planted the seed, moderated and maintained the growth. Now there's a giant field with teeming wheat that needs to be cut.

And who's God asking to do it? The workers. Harvest is plenable, but the workers are few. Here's the term for Paul.

We are workers of God's word. So we're to do our best. But what does it mean to do our best in this effort? Suppose a diesel mechanic wants to hire a worker to help him fix and maintain diesel engines.

I drive a diesel vehicle. It's a lot of work. I don't know what I'm doing with it. I feel much more comfortable with gas engines. So I've had to take my diesel in a few times to a German Volkswagen shop.

And let me tell you, even Volkswagen's have had all their complexity of their own. Great cars to own when they're working. Horrible when they go down. Let's put it that way. Let's assume there's a diesel mechanic in that shop and he hires someone to help him work on diesel engines.

[21 : 51] What do you think he will do? He's going to interview the worker. He's going to review applications. He's going to test his proficiency and his knowledge so that why the condition of diesel engines will be improved as they come into the shop.

The condition of diesel engines and thus entire diesel vehicles is at stake. So the worker must fit the bill. So too the stakes are high in gospel word ministry.

This terminology is not the easiest to hear. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved.

A worker has no need to be ashamed. We are approved by God through the grace of the gospel as sons and daughters by no work of our own.

By grace, our approval from God from a positional standpoint is unearned. But Paul wants to make very clear to Timothy that approval from God to work in such a way where harvest is had, work is accomplished and God is glorified.

[23 : 15] That takes a whole lot of discipline and readiness. And God wants to use those workers of his word who are ready for the task.

Someone encourage us in here today by the grace that we have been saved is the same grace that we then pursue this high calling. To do our best exhaust every avenue of energy and time that you can to ensure that God's word is understood by my heart and my mind.

Put yourself under trusted teachers among trusted brothers and sisters Sunday morning discipleship groups, midweek ministry Bible studies, home groups, youth group, young adult group, senior ministry.

Do your absolute best to be a student of the word. Read it, study it, memorize it. If you desire to be a worker of God's word, just as Paul is calling Timothy to be, we need to take time to know our craft, to hone our skills and to understand that the Bible is not simply a book in which stories are told and things happen.

But instead the Bible is the very source of life by which our redemption comes and our sanctification flows.

[24 : 44] As my mentor said, tether our lives to the Bible and watch how your life plays out. Secondly, here's what Timothy is going to say, I want you to apply it.

Paul is going to say to me, I want you to apply the word. Here's what he says in verse 16, avoid irreverent babble for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness.

Now this is an interesting term here. Right after saying be a worker of the word who is approved, who handles God's word rightly. Here's what Paul says, avoid irreverent babble.

Reverent babble can best be termed as godless talk. It's a reverence, it doesn't revere God as God. It's godless talk. It is such talk that treats God flippantly and seeks self-glorification through adventurous and jarring words.

Think of a statement like this, maybe God really isn't sovereign. Maybe God, you know what? Maybe God is just waiting for us to live our lives and then maybe he'll do something about it.

[25 : 52] These type of phrases and statements that people in the church and even outside the church can say that just jar Christians. What?

This is the context what Paul is saying with irreverent babble. Speaking about God and the things above God as if there is really no fear of God.

And this is what he says, Timothy, Timothy, avoid this. For why? It will lead people into more and more ungodliness.

But not only this, he says in 17, in their talk, will spread like gangrene. People are alarmed to these false truths and these irreverent comments about God.

They will tell their other friends and they'll be shocked and they'll tell their next friend and it will just spread. And then he says this, he calls out two people, among them are Hamanius and Philatus, who have swerved from the truth saying that the resurrection has already happened.

[26 : 58] They're upsetting the faith of Son. Now what's going on here is pretty interesting. You have two men who apparently were the root cause of this issue of godless rabble or talk.

And the assumption here is that these two guys most likely get a kick out of upsetting the faith of faithful believers. Or if they don't, the motive isn't to get a kick, the motive is simply because they are deceived and they really want to convince people outside of what they've been taught.

You want to see someone have a bit of an existential breakdown? Convincing that Christ has already come to collect his people unto himself. What does it say? It says again, verse 18, the resurrection has already happened.

So here's two people in the church who are going around and alarming Christians, good faithful Christians, saying, resurrection has already happened. Jesus has already returned.

What's the thing that we're all looking forward to? Jesus coming back. Amen. The hope of Christ returning to right all wrongs, to call his people unto himself, to redeem us, to glorify us with him forever.

[28 : 13] It's a great event we're all looking forward to. And here's what's happening. Hey, that already happened. Imagine if you really believed that right now. There were people who did. As they spread their irreverent babble and their false doctrine amongst the church, alarming, alarming reactions were most likely what was happening. Hopelessness.

Resurrection has already happened. I missed it. This can completely disrupt and upset a Christian life. And it's these type of things that are at stake with irreverent babble in the church.

When we do not speak of God as he is due. When we treat God as if he maybe isn't really all powerful, he's just some small dictator that sits in a tiny chair up somewhere in the clouds.

He can't really affect my life. He can't really do what I need and ask. This type of irreverent thought and irreverent talk of God is what Paul would say ungodly and leads to ungodliness and false doctrine.

So here's what he says down in verse 23. We're going to jump a little bit and we'll come back. Look at verse 23. We have a very similar thread here that we are to apply God's word after understanding it.

[29 : 35] And one of the ways we apply it is we avoid a reverent babble. And he says in verse 23, and the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil.

Verse 23, have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies. A very similar sort of idea. But here this time, foolish and ignorant controversies.

Foolish literally is the word moross where we get the word moron. So the word moron means stupid or utterly stupid of no sense.

So the first thing Paul says in verse 23 is have nothing to do with moronic and then the second word ignorant, which means uninformed. Just speaking from no knowledge and no absolute experience. Just speaking.

Speaking stupid, unintelligible, foolish things that lead to controversies. So here's what Paul is saying to Timothy. He says twice. He says in verse 16, avoid a reverent babble and now have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies.

[30 : 48] Now, how in the world is this an outflow of understanding God's word? How is this an application of understanding God's word? We understand it. We now apply God's word. We apply it in this way.

We understand that the word of God has the truths to life itself. The majors, if you will. We are sinners.

God is Redeemer. Jesus was fully man, fully God. Jesus came, died, resurrected to newness of life that we might too.

And now He reigns at the right hand of the Father and He will return one day. These majors of the Christian faith, we are taught as we understand Scripture to see the majors of Scripture and to major on them.

To spend the bulk of our lives preaching, proclaiming, living, discipling, equipping one another in these great truths.

[31 : 54] And to understand that as people deviate from these truths, it is possible that avoiding them, avoiding that talk, and as 23 says, having nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies, is a way that we can keep our focus on the main thing.

There also are times when false teaching comes into the church, and the leaders of the church, aka Timothy in this instance, are called to combat false truth, which we'll get to in a minute, but I think it's really important for us to see first and foremost that Paul immediately wants the man of God and the woman of God to avoid such talk.

And here's why. Foolish, ignorant controversies, moronic, uninformed things that we all hear from time to time, and can even participate in, these are controversies and debates over random and unhelpful theology.

Examples of such debate, let's start with the Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages, there were theologians that spent years and years debating a single question, going as far as to have multiple conferences and get-togethers and even treatisees back and forth between divided parties, and here was the question they spent all this time and energy on, how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?

I would offer this as a foolish and ignorant controversy. Here's why I would put that in that category. It is matters of no consequence, theologically or otherwise, that Paul has in mind with moronic and ignorant controversies.

[33 : 47] Regardless of the opinion you take or the conclusion you form, there's no practical application to be had. It's a no-win debate. We've all been in no-win debates.

Theological or not, if you get me on a bad day, I will go through a no-win debate with you over which is better, Marvel or DC.

It's stupid, it doesn't matter, we can all take our opinion on it. The Christopher and the Lombard movies are the best movies, possibly ever made. And the wrong day, I can argue about that. But how much worse when we take that into theology and into the church, into our small groups, into our discussion groups, into our discipleship relationships, and we spend time and time and time that is meant to be spent on those majors growing in sanctification, glorifying God, making much of the gospel, applying the truths of the gospel, living out righteousness, preaching His Word, all of these great, major umbrella things that God wants us to focus on as a church, and we neglect those for the controversies.

A couple modern controversies that are foolish and ignorant and have no consequence. I've personally been in all three of these conversations. Which modern-day public figure is the end times Antichrist?

[35 : 21] Even if any of our wrong guesses turned out to be right, what's your modern application in the meantime?

Next, what type of wood was Jesus' cross made out of? Yes, I had this discussion. Should preachers wear slacks in a suit or casual jeans and a clean tee?

Now, I intentionally split the middle here so as not to offend anybody that might have found any sides. Then another one that happened this morning, this teaching on the question that we talked about this morning, and it is what else has God redeemed outside of creation, outside of humankind?

The answer is He redeemed all of created order. We talked about this and we got into this question of, okay, did carnivores exist before the fall?

We talked about that and then we got into this question. If lions existed, they didn't eat meat before the fall, because there's no death and all that, did they have sharp teeth that were meant for tearing teeth? They're meant for tearing meat?

[36 : 27] And one of my blessed senior students said, Eric, this doesn't matter. I said, puchet, because we're teaching on that today and we moved on.

It's these type of theological questions that we can spend an embarrassing amount of time on for not careful. Here's what Paul wants and this is the end of his life so we can only presume.

I would assume that Paul's at the end of his life and he has in mind is living a life well and spending time and energy well for the kingdom advancement. And as he's sitting in jail knowing his death is coming, here's what he tells Timothy, don't waste time on this irreverent side pondering of random things.

Focus, focus on loving God and working out his word in the church and in the world. So Pastor Scott often gives us the four categories which I find helpful.

If you come to any theological issue, put it in a box or put it in a category. Is this something that I would die for? Excuse me, is this something I would die for? The essentials? Is this something I would die for? Is this something that I would debate over or just simply decide?

[37 : 46] I'm going to offer the category that Paul is talking about, the category of things that he's talking about here in theological discussion in life, aren't even actually in any of those categories. I'm going to offer a fifth category to you, Scott, and it's dump.

It's the bottom category. What would Jesus Cross made out of? Don't even decide, just dump it. It's not worth anyone's time.

That's what Paul is saying to Timothy here. And here's what I love. The second part of this application piece, how do we apply God's word? Look at me at verse 22. He says this, And here's what's so amazing.

Youthful passions, Paul's very specific here. Youthful passions. You know how I would define youthful passions in my experience, in my history? Coraling.

Immature discussions over things that don't matter. Flee those. Understand the mature, the higher way. The pure heart that focuses on what matters.

[38 : 55] And then he uses this term, not just flee those, but pursue a few things. First, pursue righteousness. You know, it's the opposite of godless talk. Righteousness.

Pursuing the heart of God and honoring Him. And then he says this, he says, faith, pursue faith. You know what the opposite of doubting God's promise of a future resurrection is?

Faith. I trust that he's coming back and he's going to take me with him. And then he says pursue love. The opposite of love is deceptive words and false teaching.

To love someone by giving them truth. And watching them grow. And then finally, with the opposite of divisive conduct is peace. Something that these two men in the church wanted was division.

But Paul says desire peace. And then we have this section in the middle, 20 to 21. Read with me. Now in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay.

[39 : 56] Some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use. Set apart as holy. Useful to the master of the house.

Ready for every good work. Here's a giant illustration in which Paul says there's a house. And in this house there are different, there's vessels for the same purpose that are of different quality. You've got gold and silver plates and cups.

And then you've got wood and earthenware plates and cups. One of these is worth a whole lot more. They're used for the same function, but they're used in different capacities. My mom had a pitcher bowl.

Big. Glass, ornate, gold, rimming. Beautiful. And she pulled this thing out and she used it once a year. And it was typically around Easter when we'd have a bunch of people over and we'd celebrate the resurrection.

And she would fill this thing with a beautiful punch, all these different types of toppings and ice creams. And it was beautiful. It was a centerpiece of the whole spread for my mom.

[40 : 54] And she would clean it and she'd put it away for the rest of the year. But throughout the rest of the year, if she ever needed a punch bowl, she would just pull out this big, giant wooden one she got from Winko.

And we used that thing seven, eight, nine, ten times a year. She'd pull it out whenever we needed it. That's what we used. But we knew the glass one, that's special. And it comes out for the biggest of all, which is Easter resurrection.

It's a symbol of the thing Paul's doing here. The one who is faithful as a worker of the Word, who understands God's Word, who loves God's Word, and who is able to maturely deny and reject false

controversies and things that are not worth time.

The one that handles God's Word well is the vessel that will be used for the greater things. It's an interesting analogy. What to be set apart as holy is to have within my own self the grace of the Gospel, that I see God's Word in His truth clearly, that I'm shaped by the transforming effects of the Gospel, and that because of that, I see the Word of God and I want to make much of it.

I want to live it out, I want to teach it from a pure heart. And then we see the very last verse of that first section, verse 19.

[42 : 19] But God's firm foundation stands bearing this seal, the Lord knows whose are His, and let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.

I often think of my favorite quotes from any theologian, A.W. Tozer says this, the most important thing about us is what comes into our minds when we think about God.

It's an important thing. For from our understanding and our thoughts about God come our actions. If I am convinced God is holy above all, worship will come.

If I'm convinced that the Gospel is the only message unto salvation in a world that screams salvation from every avenue, I will preach the Gospel above all.

And if I am convinced that the only true, authoritative, absolute authority of any kind comes from God's Word on how to live a life well.

[43 : 22] I will love and trust myself to God's Word. And here's what God says, let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity, the Lord knows whose heart hits.

Another thing that Paul wants Timothy to do is not just to understand God's Word, not just to apply it in his own life and for us to apply it in our lives, but now we proclaim it. Look with me in verse 24, and the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach patiently adoring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth. Now here's what's so amazing about this. Timothy is called to avoid debates over issues of no consequence, the maturity to say, that's not worth my time, that's wrong or foolish.

He's also called to do what? To correct with gentleness? To teach?

And the balance here is that Timothy is called to do this, to teach, to correct as an authority in the church on matters of consequence.

[44 : 39] So matters of eternal consequence, things that we ought to be ready to give an answer for. Who created all things? Was Jesus truly God and man?

Is there really a holy God who will judge all mankind one day? Does the existence of evil negate the existence of a good God? How could a loving God send people to an eternal hell? Did Jesus really resurrect from death?

Can obedience to the law merit salvation? Can grace through faith really regenerate and redeem a sinner? These are things that I would offer we need to major on.

In a world that is asking question after question, challenging after challenging every single thing. As believers, if we want to win people, we need to have answers.

And we look to God's word, we look to our authorities and our leaders and our shepherds in the church to answer these for us. If we can't figure it out, we entrust ourselves to the truth of God's word and we trust him.

[45 : 41] That as we understand these things, he will give us the words to speak when comes the time. Matters of practical consequence that also are relevant is the word of God trustworthy and true.

Should I become a member of a local church? These are things we should correct in love in one another and sharpen as God teaches us. What is the role of a local church?

What's the responsibility of elders and deacons in a church? How does the good news of the gospel empower believers toward good works? These are all things that are worth our time to study, to understand and to be refined by.

Kind to everyone, patiently enduring evil and correcting with gentleness are all dispositions of the heart that accompany the words of the mind and the mouth.

The purity of our conduct stems from the purity of the word that we are working for. That is why again, the point for Paul here is that approved workers of the word model biblical proficiency, understanding it, knowing it, applying it from a pure heart.

[46 : 48] Because knowledge of God's word and biblical proficiency without a pure heart is arguably even more dangerous. So in review, for Timothy, the leader of the church, the shepherd, a shepherd of his flock, the leaders of Paul want to remind the body of scripture, discourage quarreling, rightly handle God's word, avoid godless talk, model Christ-like virtue, avoid worthless theological debates, and correct and instruct false doctrine with kindness.

Now you might be saying, Eric, I am not a shepherd of the local church. That doesn't apply to me. To which I say partially true. But I also say partially untrue.

It is the shepherding job of the elders of any church to protect against false doctrine, to shepherd the flock.

So many of these things. But as shepherds model the way for their sheep, sheep should also seek to follow. And so too, a secondary context and application for us would be that we also remind one another of scripture.

Even if you will never step foot in a pulpit or you'll never teach in any format, we can still remind one another of truth. We can still choose to reject quarreling, rightly handle God's word, avoid godless talk, model Christ-like virtue, avoid worthless theological debates.

[48 : 18] These are all things that the whole church is capable of and called to do. And then finally sharpen one another with loving correction. Is it possible that the word that you've been studying, God has repaired your heart in such a moment?

When your brother needs you the most, you pull them aside lovingly and say, I'm not sure that's right. Something we're all called to do to submit to one another in love.

All of this for one final reason. Verse 25 and 26. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth and they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil after being captured by him to do his will.

The last thing we're called to do as workers of the world is to trust. Workers of the word is to trust it. What is the point of pursuing biblical proficiency from a pure heart?

What is the point of being approved by God as a worker of his word? It's winning others to truth.

Truth is the great light that arises within the night of darkness to lead all who are lost into life.

[49 : 31] I want to read John 1.1-5. To encourage us towards working in God's word to love one another well, to understand God's truth rightly and to be light in the darkness of deception and lies.

Here's what Jesus was told to do. John 1.1-5. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

He was in the beginning with God and all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. Jesus Christ, the very Logos of God, the Word Himself of God, his objective was to shine the light in the darkness.

The purpose of this to his church is to know that light and to be beacons of that light in a world of darkness. And it is the job of every one of us to rightly handle this, to know it, to love it, to apply it, and to trust it.

[50 : 53] I urge us all, this morning, motivated by grace, to increase your time in the Word.

For as we bind ourselves to this, so our life will go. God, I pray this morning that you would encourage us in this, that as we seek to understand your Word, God, that you would meet us with the power of your Spirit to explain it to us, to make it known.

I thank you that Timothy and Paul here in this section of Scripture give us a model of what it looks like to be a worker for you, God, to be approved that you would commission us into ministry and into work by the power of your Word.

I pray that you would give us passionate hearts that hunger for the truths of your Word. Encourage any and all of us, Lord, in our devotions, in our time of study with other believers, in the listening of your Word, whatever.

Or make us treasures and vessels of great worth, the use for honorable purposes in this church. We love you, Lord, and we trust you in all things. Amen.